

■ Our Program and Services

To meet its objectives in each economic development area, ACOA administers, or is involved in, a number of key programs and activities:

- **Business Development Program (BDP)** – A program designed to help small- and medium-sized enterprises establish, expand or modernize by offering access to capital in the form of interest-free, repayable contributions.
- **Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP)** – A new initiative launched to help the Atlantic region benefit more directly from the knowledge-based economy.
- **Bilateral Economic Development Agreements** – Federal/provincial cost-shared programs designed to improve the environment of economic growth in each of the Atlantic provinces.
- **Pan-Atlantic Economic Development Agreements** – Comprehensive, multi-sectoral agreements, involving all four Atlantic provinces, designed to strengthen and support economically significant activities such as trade and tourism.
- **Canada Business Service Centres (CBSC)** – A network of centres providing business-related services and products to small- and medium-sized enterprises and aspiring entrepreneurs in the region.
- **Community Business Development Corporations (CBDC)** – Autonomous, not-for-profit corporations, supported by ACOA, and providing entrepreneurs in the rural areas of Atlantic Canada with access to the information, financial and advice they need to succeed.
- **Adjustment Programs and other activities** – Adjustment programs provide assistance to communities in the development of alternate forms of employment where traditional industries, such as the Atlantic groundfishery, have suffered a downturn. ACOA is also responsible for implementing the Canada Infrastructure agreements in Atlantic Canada on behalf of the Government of Canada.

A Commitment to Sustainable Development

At ACOA we believe that a healthy environment is essential to the development of a strong, growing and sustainable economy. We are committed to protecting the environment of this region by setting an example in the environmental management of ACOA's own operations, by promoting sustainable businesses in the Atlantic region, and by advancing the environmental industry sector in Atlantic Canada.

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

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To order this brochure, please request:
ISBN: 0-662-30136-6
Catalogue No.: C89-445-2001E

Printed in Canada
Imprimé au Canada
Disponible en français



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Building a *stronger* economy together

A Profile of the
Atlantic Canada
Opportunities Agency



Atlantic Canada
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Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada

The Government of Canada believes that strong regions are the building blocks of a strong nation. For this reason it is committed to helping Canadians in all parts of the country build regional economic capacity as the foundation for job creation and higher earned incomes.



Who We Are

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) is a federal government agency whose mission is to work in partnership with the people of Atlantic Canada to improve the economy of our communities through the successful development of businesses and job opportunities.

Established in 1987, ACOA offers a broad range of programs and services designed to improve the climate for business growth. The Agency ensures that a wide variety of business development tools and resources are available to Atlantic entrepreneurs throughout all stages of the business life cycle, from the time they are thinking about setting up a new business, to the time they are planning for growth and expansion.

ACOA is a federal agency with a difference. Its mandate and organizational structure were determined following consultations with Atlantic Canadians across the region. For the first time, a federal organization charged with regional economic development in Atlantic Canada is actually headquartered in the region (in Moncton, N.B.) with regional and field offices in cities and towns across the four Atlantic provinces.

In Cape Breton, ACOA's programs are delivered by Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation.



What We Do

ACOA focuses on facilitating the creation and growth of small- and medium-sized enterprises, on overcoming barriers to growth, and on fostering a more entrepreneurial environment.

ACOA's key objectives are: to provide Atlantic Canadians with enhanced policy research and analysis to help create more and better economic opportunities in the region; and to provide business services to support the growth and competitiveness of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

These objectives are, in turn, made operational through the Agency's strategic priority areas.



Our Priorities

ACOA helps small firms create jobs, and generally works to improve the environment for business development, through:

- **Innovation and Technology** - because innovative companies are growing companies, and growing companies create jobs.
- **Trade, Tourism and Investment** - because every \$1 billion increase in exports creates 11,000 jobs; because the region's tourism potential promotes Atlantic Canada abroad and provides employment opportunities at home; because increased foreign direct investment accelerates the development of new commercial opportunities.
- **Policy, Advocacy and Coordination** - because ACOA has a legislated mandate to advocate for Atlantic Canada's interests; because relevant program development in the region requires the best and most current research and information on the challenges and opportunities facing the Atlantic economy.
- **Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development** - because investing in the development of existing and potential entrepreneurs is fundamental to ensuring that business start-ups and expansions continue to generate new wealth and employment.
- **Community Economic Development** - because the long-term health of smaller Atlantic communities is essential to the long-term health of the regional economy in general.
- **Access to Capital and Information** - because adequate access to capital and information stimulates business start-ups, expansion and, hence, job creation.

